

GOING BEYOND REDEMPTION

Ezra 1:3 Who is there among you of all His people? Let his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah, the God of Israel (He is God) which is in Jerusalem.

For the past four weeks, we have been dealing with a series titled **FROM RUBBLE TO RADIANCE**, and today I want to do **part 4** of that teaching.

We have been exploring the story of the Jews who were taken into captivity because of their idolatrous lifestyle. But we see God coming and putting in place a redemptive plan for His people.

- Today, we are looking at verse 3, and in there, we see Cyrus making an announcement that went against the politics of the day, in which he was releasing the Jewish captives to go back and rebuild God's temple in their homeland.
- In your study of the Bible, you must always be reminded that the Old and the New Testament are intricately linked – the Old Testament is the New Testament hidden and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. Colossians 2:17 – a shadow of things to come.
- In this regard, the release of the Jews from Babylon foreshadows the life of a redeemed child of God in several respects, and that is what I want us to talk about this morning.
- The title of my message this morning is **GOING BEYOND REDEMPTION**.
- Every believer must know that he was saved from something for something.
- Many believers live at the point of redemption, and yet the point of redemption is only the entry point.
- Unless you live your life beyond the point of redemption, the full potential of your redemption will never be realized in your lifetime.
- Your redemption is a gift from God, but what you do beyond redemption is your gift to God.
- The heart of God is to redeem people from bondage, firstly the bondage from sin and all bondage brought about by the fall of man. However, that is only one side of the coin – there is more to your salvation than just fire insurance (being saved from the pit of hell).
- Redemption means regaining or restoring something that was lost. It is God's act of freeing His people from bondage—whether bound to slavery, sin, or death—through a costly act of love. In what way is the story of redemption showcased in the scripture we read?

1. At the hand of God, captives are set free

- As we discovered last week, when King Cyrus came to the throne, the Jews had been in captivity for 70 years.
- When the fullness of time had come, God stirred up the heart of a pagan king to make a decree that resulted in their freedom.

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- Unless you have been set free from your own captivity, you will not appreciate the magnitude of that scripture.
- The state of the captives in Babylon was deplorable – Nebuchadnezzar was a brutal king who took Israel into captivity.
- He hated the Jews with a passion; the Jews had nothing they could call their own, they had no place of worship, and often their worship was laughed at by the Babylonians.
- Apart from God's redemptive power, man is a lifetime prisoner of Satan and his agents.
- An un-regenerated man is a slave to sinful passions and habits. A person who is in his sinful state is exiled from his true condition and identity.

Romans 7:23 I see a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

- Just as the Jews were powerless as captives, a man under the captivity of sin is as powerless.
- But watch this; whilst they were powerless, God raised Cyrus to set them free. Something profound happened: their captors turned out to be their saviors.
- Does that not sound familiar to you – *Romans 5:6 For at just the right time, while we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*
- Just like Cyrus, Christ came to set the captives free. The Bible tells us that it is for freedom that Christ has set us free (Galatians 5:1).
- The Lord came to bring you salvation, and His salvation is total. From the outset, Jesus declared His purpose for coming to earth.

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

- His agenda was to set man completely free, and this is the full complement of your salvation – that word salvation - *sozo* in Greek, means to save, heal, rescue, deliver, and make whole.
- It signifies comprehensive salvation, encompassing spiritual, physical, and emotional restoration rather than just forgiveness of sins.
- Yes, you are born again, but you can experience captivity in certain areas of your life. The Lord wants to bring complete salvation to your body, your relationships, and your finances.

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

- The church must never give up on the power of God to deliver, to heal, and to restore. The ministry of Jesus on earth was punctuated by miracles and deliverances. If you see something that feels like a spirit of infirmity, you must confront it in the spirit.

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- Let me go back to one of my initial statements: Your redemption is a gift from God, but what you do beyond redemption is your gift to God.
- What you do with your redemption matters, and this is the crux of the matter. Man ought to reciprocate the act of redemption.

2. Redemption demands a response.

- Yes, you are saved, but now what? This question demands a concomitant response. We cannot just say, "Thank you, Lord, for healing me" and leave it at that.
- The degree to which someone sacrifices for you, must be the degree to which you must show appreciation.
- Your redemption was free, but it cost the life of Jesus – what should be your response in the face of such love and sacrifice?

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- Cyrus was clear regarding the purpose and objective for their freedom - he sets them free, not for purposes of war, but of worship; not for their own indulgence, but for the honour of God.
- Their freedom was not for them to build a temple for another Persian god but for Jehovah, the God of Israel.
- Lest you forget – your redemption was from something for something. God will set you free from financial poverty so that you can have the capacity to worship Him financially.
- The Jews could not rebuild God's house and true worship whilst they were captives under the Babylonian rule.
- You cannot carry God's burden whilst you remain burdened by your own load.
- There is more to your freedom and victory – your gift to God is how you respond to this great salvation.
- The Jews were being released into a bigger dimension of life. God is looking for purpose-driven individuals who look beyond their personal comfort.

1 John 3:16 By this we know what love is: Jesus laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

- Not everyone responded to the call to go back and build, and those who did not respond remained in captivity, but those who responded to this unmerited love walked into freedom.
- Those who responded understood the weight of responsibility on their shoulders. Do you understand the responsibility you have as the redeemed of the Lord?
- Redemption begins with personal comfort but ends with the comfort of God's people.